

CLOSE UP

No 2

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AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

I had this from a distinguished author whom I suggested might dynamically discourse on the film :

About cinemas. I do not care for them, but I do not know why I don't. I think my prejudice is hardly justified. But I couldn't write about it. I've nothing to say. I'm so sorry.

Well, I know. But it's not uncommon. Quite a number of people are like that. But isn't it somehow a giveaway ? I DO NOT KNOW WHY I DON'T. I'VE NOTHING TO SAY. Now that is exactly the sort of thing one is up against ; the danger isn't in your reactionary, but in just this thing—this sort of spineless apathy and shortsightedness. The danger is not in the comment that one is approaching the film with the highminded and superior attitude formerly reserved for the Russian Ballet, or any journalistic claptrap of the kind,

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(which after all is according to a fairly efficient formula) but in people who do not like things but do not know why they don't. With the reactionary and journalist one knows where one is. A journalist is a man holding down his job, and saying what the policy of his paper expects of him ; the reactionary just opens his maw and squeals. But with these others, sometimes clever people, charming too, things may or may not exist, god may or may not exist, destruction ~~may or may~~ not exist. Let others find out, they say, and expect to come in at the end when the battle is over and the victor established. Well, why shouldn't they ? Why shouldn't they is not an important thing. Equally why should they. Why should you or I have learnt to walk when it would have been much easier to permanently sit ? Because the disadvantages of not learning would have been worth consideration. One usually does anything only because not doing it would be more troublesome in the long run.

There is a kind of ennui and another kind of ennui and each is alright when it is *conscious*, when the attitude is that no ultimate end is worth immediate means ; but unconscious ennui, that puffed-up dismal vanity is always and infallibly indecent.

On the other hand there is plenty of excuse for busy people who have not had time to see beyond the hash and rehash of cheap films. To realise what cinematography can and will mean is a full-time occupation. People are needed, *we* are needed, CLOSE UP is needed to bring facts before people. Eighty per cent of any cinema audience has learnt only to

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want its Lya de Putti, its Tom Mix, its May McAvoy, regardless of the film in which they happen to appear. Tom Mix is on at the Royal. Good enough, let us go to the Royal, no more question, nothing else to worry about. Clara Bow is on at the Biograph. We must go. And when it is bad we can chatter or go to sleep or make love.

You will never get more than fifty per cent on your side in any cause, so that leaves thirty to win, and, there is not much doubt about it, they *can* be won. Out of this thirty comes the twenty that apologises for going, says "awfully absurd, sheer waste of time" but creeps in as often as possible, swallowing films whole and loving them if the truth were known. The ten per cent is split into those who go to the *good* films (e. g. Ben Hur, The Big Parade, The Ten Commandments) those who go for rest and something to talk about, and those who go because they can lose themselves in a cinema as they cannot lose themselves in a theatre. These are all healthy prey, and will come to the fold in time. They are the people who have open minds, who are ready to absorb ideas, providing the ideas are spread out in front of them. When better things are ready they will accept them naturally, just as they accepted lifts in place of stairs, and escalators in place of lifts. They would not have invented lifts or escalators themselves, but when the thing was done, they approved and used them. So with films. When ardent forerunners have brandished their banners sufficiently and the thing is before their eyes they will take to good films as naturally as they took to bad ones.

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People are still apt to sneer when you talk of films being art. Even picture-goers. Movies are not the Salon or the Royal Academy, they are not the Louvre or the British Museum, they are not Dostoieffsky or Anatole France or Rudyard Kipling, they are not Beethoven or Debussy. They are not linked up. Nobody has related them to these people, and the catch is *nobody can't*. They aren't related to these people and the things they stand for. The movie is the new thing, the movie goes back to no tradition. And millions will deplore it. Millions will say ah, yes, you cannot expect a *great* art with no background, nothing behind it. But putting thousands against millions (which in a way proves the case *for* movies) people will say with me, the great and glorious thing about the movie is just that — just its utter newness. It has, it is true, its conventions, but they are as tiny runnels to the abysmal channels carved by tradition in other arts out of which one must climb before seeing anything as anything is.

The glorious strength of the movies is just that they have no past, no history. This aimless and senile clinging to the old, to the old, to the old, gives one at length black phobia. The newest artist will gloat and gloat because of this medium. Nightingales and roses have been in poetry until they are almost, if not completely destroyed for us. There is a point. The artist, who leaps on ahead pointing out beauty or truth *must* leap on ahead. He has to dance at the head of the procession, saying look look. If he can only point at the same thing always he becomes wearisome, no longer a teacher. He

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just cannot go on much longer saying "ah Spring !" and "ah Nightingales !" or literature will lose its meaning. The startled author of today writes poems to squeaking shoes and jampots, and that is getting beauty upside down.

And meanwhile the procession, the mass, is being kept waiting, rather between two stools ; neither content with roses and Spring, nor mechanised. And indeed, this is the time for films to begin to mean something. Titles like HEARTS IN BONDAGE, SAINTS AND SABLES, LYING WIVES are beginning to have the same effect on the procession, the mass, as its nightingales and roses.

It is not the least good pretending any longer that the film is a thing one does not go to. That it has been and is a place for young people to suck sweets and hold hands in is distinctly to its credit. A cinema audience has a kind of obliteration of individuality, a kind of freedom that you never find in the theatre. And it is far more commendable to be negligent or amorous in front of a bad film than prinked and starched in front of a bad play. As a matter of fact the very people who say "Cinemas ?... Oh, how COULD you !" one has seen in shoals guffawing and gurgling over plays that any movie audience would feel insulted to have to look at. And if it's Billingsgate bed-rock argument, there is at least something straight about the droop of heads on shoulders you find in cinemas that puts to shame the carnivorous expression of a theatre audience out for "smut". And the worst movie is seldom as indecent as a play, except Nell Gwynn and one or two others whose names we will reserve for future use.

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As a matter of fact comparison is impossible, only that people *do* run the idea of comparing. The theatre is one thing, the movie another. "I like the pictures," people say, "but I like to see the *real* thing." Meaning the play. Well, to borrow a phrase from the back of the dictionary, *chacun à son goût*, only don't let us get into a metaphysical discussion of reality.

Last month I outlined the position of the film to-day from the point of achievement. This month I am dealing with *lack* of achievement. What hasn't been done is in the minds of the public; what hasn't been put before the public is honest facts since the year 1910, or thereabouts. Prejudice then rampant now crawls, but has life. Prejudice which then made mothers and magistrates quite calmly blame on the film the countless evils due to rotten education, and lack of sex instruction, comes to the surface, still alive for the million and oneth time, and tomorrow for the million and twoth. Be it admitted, however, films themselves have suffered and do and will from just the same cause, from false values, and lack of right education. Mothers and magistrates still point to the screen and say "Please it wasn't me. HE did it !" forgetting that such values as a child may deduce are entirely values they have *taught* it to deduce. Mostly films are tract like in their sledge-hammering of the necessity for virtue, but childrens' books, put down in Freudian black and white are nearly always in the range of elaborate pathology. There are dozens of other prejudices, and dozens upon dozens of "hardly justified" prejudices, of not caring but

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not knowing why not, and it is nobodys' fault ~~except~~ the cinemas'.

When one thinks of the Little Annie Roonies and Little Lord Fauntleroy's one almost says oneself I've nothing to say. Mary Pickford in white socks and a tucked dress hardly covering her thighs is a symbol of niceness. Mary Pickford in black velvet knickers and a lace collar is the spirit of childhood. She is *nice*, she is a *nice* woman, she is a *good* woman. People say that, and I for one am sure they are right. But what I mean is *why* is this sort of thing swallowed? Because Mary is driving the serf idea back of civilization down serf throats. Mary is pretending that Human Sparrows, Little Annie Roonies, are something to do with truth and beauty and art. She is playing safe with safe values, there is no threat or danger in her *innocence*, it is not even a sugar coated pill. It is a mere lollipop for the mob to comfortably munch. And then people that do not greatly matter in themselves get to believing in her, or not her so much as the thing she stands for, and that is where cinematography begins and ends for them. Other people get to believing in say Nita Naldi, or Pola Negri. And so it comes back, Nita Naldi is on at the Grand, Pola Negri is on at the Bijou.

The whole feeling in this belongs to the 1910 period. The words nice, nasty, morbid, vulgar, dirty, clean, are not words merely, but complete attitudes of mind, complete summaries coded in 1910 language. That is how the film *convention* has come about, a convention of curious subtleties. The habitué recognises them. Mae Murray coming into a room

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in a certain way means to the habitué that she is going to be seduced by Roy D'arcy. To the novice it means she is rather unnecessarily wagging her torso. The habitué knows that certain things mean menace, certain things inevitable denouements. A dropped letter will send his mind hopping and skipping and jumping prophetically down the course of the story to the final amatory close-up. To the novice it means not a thing. It is a convention, and like conventions of every kind, to be avoided as much as possible or improved upon.

Not that convention matters when it is really representative. But I have not seen many convincing matters of technique except close-ups of letters to read with one thumb on each side of the screen, and things of that kind. But be it noted, I speak here of the commonly accepted formulas, not of certain sets of symbols used here and there individually. Many more experimentors are necessary before we must think of beginning to make conventions, and of course, it is to be remembered that progress is being made every day, new ideas, new developments. We do not know yet how far it can go, but inevitably it must go on and on for a long way yet. There is already the film that will take in twilight, and the next thing will be the abolition of arc lamps, there is already the attachment by which the camera is fitted to the body of the photographer, and thus moved as the eye of a person might move, there is already the enlarged screen, the ground glass screen for stereoscopic projection, the beginning of sound with films (and how awful this is going to be for a time!) and

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all manner of experimental work hurrying on to a completely new equipment and technique. While through all this, the only thing that has not been done is the opening of the public mind to the *realities* of the screen. The attitude has been wrong. It has been film industry, film industry, film *industry*. And quite rightly up to a point. But naturally, after a certain amount of this people think Oh, films there's no art there, it's all purely industrial. But we have thirty per cent to capture, and we are going to talk film *art* at them until the right balance is established. Then, and then only can one really begin.

* * *

And this month I was going to say more about a means to show films with special interest or experiment publicly in the European capitals. So far nothing definite has come about ; there is much to find out about restrictions and censorship and licences, and special conditions, but everything in time. It should not be so difficult once properly started. I know that people are enthusiastic over the notion, and rightly so, for here is a chance for the public to see, on the side, and simply, what is being done other than the more or less static presentation of commercial films. It is completely natural that there is ignorance and apathy, because nobody is aware of the very great number of small film makers busy trying out new forms, and nobody *can* be aware until their work is seen,

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which wont happen through trade channels. It will probably start with a derided (it is bound to be derided) flush of films violently reactionary; abstractions, trick-photographs, headlong plunges into mistranslations of other arts, impressions of thought-processes, bombs and explosions of refutation, utterly scrapping commercial formulas, awful misapplications of cubism, and surrealism, and impressionism. And everybody will blow small trumpets, then there really *will* be a superior attitude. Hideous words will be invented, and gushings of pseudo-pseudo modernists, and much clacking and third rate talk. And the Press will thunder, and musical comedy will do its best to be caustic, and good citizens will say, these awful people (And there just *will* be some awful people). And we will hear of "A New Drawing-Room Craze" and "A New Pastime For The Idle Rich" and five or six years will have heard the derision abating. Then the stage of taking it for granted. Then the stage of publicity, of These Daring Young Moderns. Then a slow welding, a peeping across from the Commercial ambush to the Rebel (that word will be used) ambush. Because back of the pseudo-pseudos and the third rate talk, not heard so much or seen so much, the real plant will grow and flower. The real plant will have taken nourishment from an improving commercial standard, and spread its roots there. And finally there will be co-ordination. A treaty perhaps, or a more subtle agreement—a growing together. And by that time the power of the film will be immense beyond prediction.

In the meantime we are working toward this end,—the

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public showing of progressive and developmental films. But remember there are many cows on the track and it may take time.

* * *

A great number of my correspondants (to whom herewith I tender thanks) have got away with the idea that I am, that Close Up is, out to high-hat and scorn the commercial film, and go on to elevate the whole cinema industry to a point of indescribable aestheticism. Far from it. We want it understood that we accept and laud the film in any form; the worst film has its public and its following. And for that reason, for a time at any rate, if not forever, there will be a market for the worst films. Just as little penny novels go the rounds, and keep scullery maids amused, so the worst film is in demand. But the thing is that there is a great lack of distinction; broadly speaking anything up to seventy-five per cent of modern films are at a certain level; they have moments, they reach a vast majority, they satisfy. But there is a minority of several million people to whom these films are tiresome, a minority that loves the film, but has too much perception, too much intelligence to swallow the often dismal and paltry stories and acting set up week by week before it on the screen. This minority has got to have films it can enjoy, films with psychology, soundness, intelligence. Nobody wants (as a matter of fact a great many *do*) to rob the masses

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of their entertainment, and as long as they desire eyewash and bunk they must have it. There are many people better capable of understanding and catering for the masses than we are, and our concern is not with the masses, but with the minority,—again, I repeat, a minority of millions,—whose tastes are disregarded, and whose tastes matter supremely, and *must* be studied. On a sound basis there is much money for the producer who looks to these for his public. Organisation is all that is needed. And organisation is not such a difficult matter to arrange, although it has its pitfalls. Actually there is no need for quite such bad films in the big theatres of the Capitals as one sees, for here, in these theatres, the intellectual level is higher. One always notices that the better (I do not say the *best*, though I almost might) films fill the house, while the cheaper small-town, provincial sort of thing leaves it part empty. The fault is among the producers. There is no reason why they should not turn out bad films in the 1910 tradition if they can sell them, but it would be impossible to expect them to have the decency to say, "Yes, this is a rotten film, and must not be shown in the Capitals, or to any intelligent audience." The fault is equally among the theatres. It would be impossible to expect them to have the decency to say, "Oh, yes, this might go down, but we have too much respect for the intelligence and morale of our audiences to take it." As things are the good, better and best films can only hope to be wedged in between the Little Annie Roonies and the Evil and Ermines. And one in quest of the good film may have to sit through a couple

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of hours of pie-slinging or glycerine and scorn and virginity complexes, and arrive at last before the title of the thing he has come to see too spent and out of key to be able to appreciate it.

If one is careful with arranging beforehand, it is true this need not happen. But how much more charming and easy if we—the minority could just walk into a theatre, one particular theatre, haphazardly as the majority wanders into its many theatres, knowing we would see films which, even if we did not always like, would be stimulating to mind and perception.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

BRITISH SOLECISMS

Written by a member of one of the leading British Film Studios this article contains some inside facts which cannot be disputed. There is no malicious feeling. All who desire good British films must know the kind of thing they are up against as it is only by such knowledge that any success either artistically or commercially can be brought about. (Ed.).

Everyone is talking of a revival of British films.

The phrase is hardly felicitous. Where in the history of British pictures are to be found films with the aesthetic merits of "Caligari"; "Warning Shadows"; or "The Last Laugh"?

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Rather should we speak of the birth of British films, but that would be too obviously a confession of weakness. If there is genius in a country it is bound to come out, to make itself felt in some way or other. Remember that England was supplying films to America before the war and then realize what a stigma it would be for us, after all these years, to speak of the birth of British films. So we point at dreadful scarecrows of the past and gibber of the revival of British films.

Of course film technique changes. When the Film Society decided to revive Lubitsch's "Marriage Circle" in London the Committee did not get an opportunity to run the film through till a few hours before the actual performance. They were appalled ! What they had thought subtle and witty a few years ago was now slow and heavy. They did their best to remedy the evil by projecting the film much faster than is usual but even then it sadly lacked its pristine brilliance.

Yet making all allowances for old British films not one of them can really be singled out as good. "The very best British film ever made" recently reached the cutting room prior to revival. It got no further !

The disagreeable fact must be faced that Britain lacks film tradition. What then ? Surely if there are no Robinsons, Murneaus, or Lupu Picks, there are at least men who are efficient, men who know their jobs ? Surely England can acquire the slick polish that America spreads like treacle over her sentimental bread and butter plots ?

Alas not even that !

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A film was recently made in England on which the company, who were sponsoring it, had determined to spare no reasonable expense. An enormous set (that is enormous for conservative and timid Britishers) was erected on a big open field. It rained for weeks before the production. The field became sodden and transport almost impossible. The plasterers were held up, the carpenters found it impossible to continue work. Then on the very day that the publicity man had seen fit to give to the paper a glowing panegyric on the wonders of this particular set, and the suitability of the English climate in spite of persistent calumnious statements (oh irony of everything!) a hurricane blew. The ground was rotten, the supports could not hold, and the most important and substantial building collapsed. It was little short of a miracle that no men were killed, for the building was surmounted by massive plaster work. By the time the set was finished overhead expenses had mounted alarmingly. As the producer and some of the artists were under contract the company had been particularly anxious not to keep them idle. So a great deal of the money, instead of going into the production, had been dissipated in overtime for the labourers; who could not, however willing, have given of their best for such tiring long hours. A little foresight and the work might have been started earlier; certainly the same money could have kept the contract artists out of work for months. But now for the climax.

When the shooting began it was found that the pictures were flat. The set had been built the wrong way round!

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When the sun was in the best position for shooting it was behind the houses ! That was not all. The street had been made particularly wide to fit the requirements of the scenario. The producer found that the ordinary crowds, that he had been accustomed to handle with great effect, were lost in the large street. Hundreds more extras were needed. No one had thought of that !

Neither had anyone forseen the effect of the English climate—and how well they ought to realize that problem by now—in another recent film, this was a story of the orient. What an orient it was ! After days of waiting for the sun to shine in tiny intervals some shots were taken by a producer boldened by ennui. The “rushes” revealed an orient without the langorous atmosphere usually associated with the East, an orient of wildly swinging lanterns and billowing curtains !

While on the subject I might mention, for the benefit of those who have never had to ‘stand-by’ on a set all day waiting for a ray of reluctant sunshine, how impossibly handicapped England is by her climate. In Hollywood they say that they have twenty-five rainy days in the year ! One producer, whom I know, circumvented the English climate in a most delightful manner. He was nine days behind schedule and in danger of the frowns of the powers that be. One night he took the script and blue pencil home with him and cut out half the scenario. The next day he arrived with a beaming face. He was up to schedule ! Another example of British methods !

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Most British producing companies are in a state of chaos. There is no organization, no centralization, no efficiency. In the art department it is sometimes impossible to obtain such simple materials as crayon or blue paper. The worst example of this policy of meddle and hope that I have met was during the construction of a street scene. The carpenters had been instructed to use as little wood as possible, but they found it necessary to order a small extra quantity. The clerk of works was immediately summoned to the head office. He explained the position and pointed out that the set was to be the principal one in the picture and therefore justified a little additional attention.

After a lot of humming and hawing one of the directors said, "Well, we are not quite sure if we can use this set in the picture." They had only just started to write the scenario ! There may be a lot to be said against the water tight scenarios of Hollywood but. . .

Perhaps you cannot blame the companies entirely for the complete lack of initiative in their programmes. They have grown to distrust their producers, and seeing the numbers of 'duds' gathered in the British industry you cannot be surprised. Our leading British producer confided to me, in a weak moment, that he directed his pictures with his tongue in his cheek. Another of the star directors might do something big if only he could be persuaded that there are other shots besides close ups. I have seen disconsolate actresses, sit on a stool for hours on end while he secured hundreds of feet of 'close up'. The most typical English director I can think

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of is famed for his word. He has a complicated system of whistles by which he manoeuvres his supers.

I once asked him, "Don't you get muddled with this intricate code of yours?"

"Not a bit old boy", was the answer, "you see I know that something has to happen each time I blow the whistle, and the boys know that something has to happen. Neither of us knows quite what is to happen, and that gives an effect of spontaneity don't you know."

Much in the same strain was the statement of an art director who told me that he made his models in the hope that they would come out all right. A leap in the dark. If they didn't. . . he shrugged his shoulders.

There is one word that sums up British production. Haphazard!

"But this is all very well," you say, "but what of the fresh blood, what of the youth of the industry?"

To begin with the people now in pictures over here try to keep it a close circle. Each is trying to get his relations in, and oh what a web of petty jealousies!

In this fight money and influence are the determining factors, brains and education dead weights against you. To be branded a high brow is fatal.

I was talking to a youth who had just secured, through influence, a much sort after job on the floor.

"Are you keen on this work"? I enquired.

"Oh! no," he said, "you see my father tried to get me into a bank for two years but as I couldn't matriculate I drifted

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into this. There was nothing else to do without matriculation."

The English directors of tomorrow!

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

MRS. EMERSON

The regular way of instituting clerical resemblances and neglecting hazards and bespeaking combinations and heroically and heroically celebrating instances, the regular way of suffering extra challenges, the regular way of suffering extra changes, the regular way of suffering extra changes the regular way of submitting to examplers in changes, the regular way of submitting to extraordinary celebrations, the certainty, because keep centre well half full whether it has that to close when in use, no not repeatedly, he has forgotten.

Now then.

Now then shining, now then shining.

Mrs. Evangeline Henderson went in. She said that the morning. She said that in listening. No I will not be funny.

Pleasing pleasing pleasing.

Little words frankly, your game is not a silly game. Birds are so restive.

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Not that to-day to-night believe the corrected list believe more blotter than the red. I said I knew America.

My sister she is not my sister, my sister she is my sister her plan is to be represented by absolutely the same letter paper.

One day one day.

I cannot see I cannot see I cannot see. I cannot see.

I cannot see beside always.

I have not selected my pronunciation. I have not selected my pronunciation.

I will repeat I will not play windows. In the new houses there are not windows for ventilation or any other use. They say that that is their use. They say that kindly amazing lights they say that kindly amazing lights and they say no that is not the use of a word, they say that unkindly certain lights, anyhow when I am pronounced that certain cheerful shapes are fainter, they say that they have pronounced exceptionally.

The beginning of little winning the beginning of little winning claims. If you say little winning if you do not separate that is if you do not separate between, if you do not separate between if in in not in, all the pronunciations, all the pronunciations.

All the chances of intermediate investigation are so argued that the recent disturbances fit the first change in silent rugs. Silent rugs. I thought that I would state that I knew certainly that she was so seen that if her eyes were so placed not violently not verbally so placed. She is not agreeable. She is not so agreeable. I wish I could safely legitimise, and I will.

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I think it is what I said what I reorganised in mounting her. I mounted her there. Deliberate. She has a son not a son he was a thicker one. I go on. Begun.

Bessie is like Bertha.

I can see that if you did the reason would be that there was certainty.

If heating is beside the meal and the selection of masterpieces makes communication, communication is ardently rechosen, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly resumed, communication is suddenly rested, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly chosen communication is suddenly chosen.

No use, no use in resolving that Bertha is piled, no reason in slackening, that is a word, that is a word severely, of no do not deceive the more important asking if you have never been to a collection of repeated references.

I do not say that green is believed to be that colour. I do not say that green makes lips, I do not say that they colour stations, I do not say that she would spread it into I hope that I believe that I select that I retain. I hope that no occurrence and no surprise and no concerning question. I do not wish to hear it again.

Oh well not now anyway. You do say it. Oh cannot you see that the price is allowed that the complete wrecking of louder sounds.

I cannot help it, Bessie is like Bertha, I see the resemblance I resolve to silence confusions I shall believe no pointed sin-

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I will repeat I will not play windows. In the new houses there are not windows for ventilation or any other use. They say that that is their use. They say that kindly amazing lights they say that kindly amazing lights and they say no that is not the use of a word, they say that unkindly certain lights, anyhow when I am pronounced that certain cheerful shapes are fainter, they say that they have pronounced exceptionally.

The beginning of little winning the beginning of little winning claims. If you say little winning if you do not separate that is if you do not separate between, if you do not separate between if in in not in, all the pronunciations, all the pronunciations.

All the chances of intermediate investigation are so argued that the recent disturbances fit the first change in silent rugs. Silent rugs. I thought that I would state that I knew certainly that she was so seen that if her eyes were so placed not violently not verbally so placed. She is not agreeable. She is not so agreeable. I wish I could safely legitimise, and I will.

CLOSE UP

I think it is what I said what I reorganised in mounting her. I mounted her there. Deliberate. She has a son not a son he was a thicker one. I go on. Begun.

Bessie is like Bertha.

I can see that if you did the reason would be that there was certainty.

If heating is beside the meal and the selection of masterpieces makes communication, communication is ardently rechosen, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly resumed, communication is suddenly rested, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly chosen communication is suddenly chosen.

No use, no use in resolving that Bertha is piled, no reason in slackening, that is a word, that is a word severely, of no do not deceive the more important asking if you have never been to a collection of repeated references.

I do not say that green is believed to be that colour. I do not say that green makes lips, I do not say that they colour stations, I do not say that she would spread it into I hope that I believe that I select that I retain. I hope that no occurrence and no surprise and no concerning question. I do not wish to hear it again.

Oh well not now anyway. You do say it. Oh cannot you see that the price is allowed that the complete wrecking of louder sounds.

I cannot help it, Bessie is like Bertha, I see the resemblance I resolve to silence confusions I shall believe no pointed sin-

CLOSE UP

gularities I cannot see why a dog is black and a voice is necessary. I cannot see why a voice is necessary. Paula. Paula said that she would not care to see her again. Paula.

Bessie I do not wish to mention Bertha. I can simply explain that.

I do not wish to mention Bessie I can refer that.

I do not select to have similar sounds. Bertha can be surrounded. Bertha can be surrounded, Bertha can be surrounded by so much saliva. Peace to children.

When I state when I state and restate when I restate I say that there is a ceiling. A ceiling is a roof. A roof is formidable, formidably speaking, a roof is formidably speaking.

Now I turn away.

Please copy this. Others able to copy this. Others able to copy this after. After measure.

I have come to research. Bessie refers to Bertha not to Bertha. Bessie refers to Bertha.

I like hesitation. I like the pleasing selection of respectable shouting. I like recreation. I like surrounding dear papa.

More and more the original cause is forgotten. She wished to see her son-in-law. She met her daughter who was coming down from being depressing. She is of course everything. This is a mistake it is an early morning-train.

When she met me she had much to tell.

We went out and were arriving. Scarcely pleasures. Scarcely pleasures extraordinarily. Scarcely pleasures slightly

CLOSE UP

in advance of extreme kindness. Now that he is well and strong and knowing their extreme anxiety he was well and strong knowing her extreme anxiety.

Please direct that she is not to say that she is not to say Bertha or Bessie. Please direct that she is not to say not Bertha. Please to direct.

Will you give this to your fathers.

It is natural without children natural.

Hesitating and certainly. Between that and pointing to his service later they make this. They didn't except that Hannah would be in it. They didn't expect that he would seem to be sat upon a single piece of cardboard box.

It is very irresponsible to be a little neglected and then comes the question of pulling.

One of his brothers the man was descending by his brother. They thought nothing of it naturally one would have objected. They seemed searchful.

It gives you some arrangement you see.

No I don't think so.

He says that selfish selling is more likely than selfish bewildering.

I do not care to remember what I do not feather. I do not remember whether a flavour is farther. I do not remember whether cork tins are believed to be older. I do not care to mention any other.

I do not care to bewilder.

I do not care to sell her. I do not care to be a locked cellar. I do not care to be cheerier.

CLOSE UP

I say I do know Bessie. Bessie resembles Bertha. Paula resembles Bessie. Bessie resembles Bertha Bessie resembles Bertha. I do not offer to determine whether Paula and Bertha and Bessie are distinctly separate.

It is especially getting bigger. It is especially slighter. Why is there a change in water colour. Water is coloured by the sudden departure of all the interested readers of a newspaper.

I meant to say that it is necessary to spill all there is where there is and I say that I incline to believe that more that the more often I see it everywhere the more often. She'd be just lonesome which would show that the same water is not behind the mountains. I have heard it mentioned. I expect to get a recommendation and I will not say it is for suggestions.

You are down to nineteen.

The same.

How is Bessie this morning.

Please say a baby.

I do not leave the same all day and I do not share unless you are coming to caress country.

I do not like having said that I do not see why an excuse is preferable. I do not like the sound of spreading. I do not like the meaning of the late carpet. I do not believe in wretches. I do not like whispers. I do love to say such very hurried papers. I do mean to believe that soldiers order pearls. I do mean to say that it was a tumbler.

I am getting rather anxious.

Really I am getting rather anxious.

CLOSE UP

The way to show shapes is to realise to realise rightly that mentionings are abominable.

I can't help it I can't help hearing carrots.

I do help it, I do help it fastening chocolate.

A secret time in spinning.

Messes remembered mentioning. They remembered mentioning cleaning. They remembered mentioning, they saw eight angles, they meant to do mending.

This is a little climb in when.

Not to-day.

Yesterday, not some day.

Yesterday.

Wretched creature.

Wretched reason for winter. Really not at all.

I wish I had a certain rain.

Then a little barometer.

Then a dry cellar.

Then a dog which means to be old.

Then all the exceptional white.

Then a climbing bell.

Then more water.

Then all over it.

I wish I had to go and get her.

GERTRUDE STEIN.

THE CINEMA AND THE CLASSICS

II

RESTRAINT

We need, I think, next more precision, more "restraint" in the presentation of classic themes. Such films as *Quo Vadis* or *Theodora* are excellent in their milieu and since dealing with turbulent and late periods, they are of necessity, ornate, over-crowded, over-detailed and confused. However, even this is a moot point. *Helen of Troy* was excellent in particulars. But to present the "classic" it is not necessary to build up paste board palaces, the whole of Troy, the entire over-whelming of a battle fleet. The "classic" as realism could be better portrayed by the simplest of expedients. A pointed trireme prow nosing side ways into empty space, the edge of a quay, blocks of solid masonry, squares and geometric design would simplify at the same time emphasize the pure *classic* note. There is already a stamp, a tradition. A room, in a pseudo-classic film, as a rule, reaches on and on, through doors and door-ways. The *Last Days of Pompeii* was in this particular the most excruciating. A Greek interior should be simple, cold and chaste, with one blocked in doorway, not a vista of ten ; with one single fountain jet, not an

CLOSE UP

elaboration of Jean Bologniaesque detail. Again with the costume. We need simple beautiful line, bodies almost naked as in the German production *Force and Beauty*. This experiment failed, of course, grievously in parts as all really broad innovations are bound to do, but there was one short excerpt of life as it should be, German classic that became almost Greek classic. Young men swing through a door way, this time, consistently weather worn (why must these "classic" interiors all smell of varnish ?) across (this was excellent) strewn earth and sand down to an open circus-like palestra. In the distance there were figures wrestling in pure vase-gesture, black-figure vase pre-fifth century gesture. The men swaying forward walked as soldiers not as ballet dancers. They did not mince. There was also one exquisite naked silhouette of a woman, the famous judgment of Paris tableau. The contour of this film Aphrodite was beautiful and the setting adequate, but again simplification would have rammed in the really exquisite and inspired creation. The "classic" as seen on the screen suggests (with rare and inspired exceptions) a rather rowdy Chelsea arts ball rather than a pre-fifth or fifth century piece of sculpture or clean line drawing. We want to remove a lot of trash, wigs in particular, Nero's wig, the blond Mary Pickford curls of the blind Nydia in Pompeii, hair piled and curled and peaked and frizzed like old photographs of our 1880 great aunts. Sweep away the extraneous.

Now this is not so difficult as it might seem. According to preconceived cinema rote (cinema tradition is mercifully young enough to be modified, to be utterly re-inspired) a classic "set"

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is built up, is constructed and before it, classic figures, even the most successful, are apt to be blurred or cheapened. Expense has to be considered and this is where the young innovator has his big chance. The true classic is not a thing of built up walls, any more than the true Elizabethan gains by elaborate stage scenery and pasteboard perspective. Streets and by-ways should be on one plane, we should be somewhere, not all over the place. We should be *somewhere* with our minds, line should radiate as toward a centre not out and away from the central point of interest, whether that central point is an altar, a shop, a street corner, a window or a person. We should *be* somewhere, our getting on somewhere else will come in due course. The days of paste-board Rialtos is, or should be, over in the art of the stage as well as in the more subtle, though for the moment less traditionally evolved, art of the cinema. There is where our hope lies. It isn't too late to get down to dots, to begin at the beginning, to, if necessary, sweep away what has already been over-elaborated and lay fresh altar blocks. As I say our least set should have its focus of simplicity, its as it were altar block, should mean something. Should *be* somewhere. This "somewhere" is easy to accomplish, a blank drop scene, a room, such as we live in to-day, bare of accessories. A bare square room is to-day what it was in Pompeii, what it more or less was in Athens, in Syracuse. A garden remains a garden and a rosebush a rose-bush. Laurel trees still exist outside suburbia and a classic laurel grove for instance is easy to represent ; one branch, placed against a soft back drop, or against a wall of

CLOSE UP

any empty room, with suitable cross-effect of shadow. The fascinating question of light alone could occupy one for ever ; this edge of a leaf and this edge of a leaf ; the naturalistic and the sheer artificial must merge, melt and meet. The pure classic does not depend for effect for instance, on a whole, a part has always been important, chiselling and cutting, shaping and revising. A laurel grove rises in one branch set against a plain room wall, and a figure without exaggerated, uncouth drapery becomes Helen or Andromeda or Iphigeneia more swiftly, more poignantly against just such a wall, obtainable by anyone, anywhere, than in some enormous rococo and expensive "set" built up by the "classicists" of Hollywood who spread Nero's banquet table with Venetian glass and put the quattrocento Romola to sleep (or to dine) in a more or less eighteenth century milieu. Not that I have any quarrel with any of the "set" makers, with scene shifters or the general miracle-workers of such elaborate and startling effects as, for instance, the flight of the Children of Israel and the Pharoah's chariots. Pharoah's chariots, Pharoah's horses were excellent, but sand and horses and excellently trained circus-riders have their place. I am concerned here chiefly with attempts at more subtle simple effects ; they so often fail for lack of some precise and definite clear intellect at the back of the whole, one centralizing focus of thought cutting and pruning the too extraneous underbrush of tangled detail. Someone should slash and cut. Ben Hur drove his chariot with decorum and with fervour but. . . when I would begin to criticize I am lost myself in a tangle of exciting detail, am myself

so startled and amazed by certain swiftness, certain effects of inevitable precise mass movement (such as, in another instance, the crowd again crossing sand in Babylonian *Intolerance*) that I lose my own clue, become sated and lost and tired. Isn't that the danger? Satiety? Having become sated with the grandiose, can't someone with exquisite taste and full professional share of technical ability light our souls with enthusiasm over, as I have said, one laurel branch, one figure sitting sideways, one gesture (not too frigid and not too staggily static) as for example toward a waiting enemy? Iphigenia pleading for her life against one rough edge of built-up altar, with severe wall again, and possibly (to balance the edge of altar) the slim, updarting geometric line of half an Ionic (or, correct me, Doric?) pillar. Sand and rock and sea. These are the Greek equivalent for the Roman mass of soldiery, the Prætorian formations and the vast thronging of the colorseum. You and you and you can cause Odysseus with one broken oar to depict his woefulness. You can bring Callypso back with violet tufts, herself placed perhaps against one single heavy rock, a thread of violets perhaps in her tight bound hair. Don't, above all, let hair stream in the wind as happened (perhaps not without a certain charm) in *Helen Of Troy*. Keep slightly natural, naturalistic but formalised. If the hair must hang, it must hang heavy, like gold threads in a Crivelli altar piece, like the carved Ionic maidens of the Acropolis Museum, like the Delphic Charioteer himself, should he unloose his head-band.

Or if madness is indicated, make it a psychic manifesta-

CLOSE UP

tion done with intricate but simple fade-outs or superimposed impressions. Here the camera has it over all other mediums. Success is obtainable in representation of psychic phenomena, can be obtained, has, in certain instances, been. The pseudo-classic madness of Victor Varconi in *The Last Days Of Pompeii* was banality incarnate. But, turning from madness to vision, not only can we recall men and women of antiquity, but the gods themselves. Hermes, indicated in faint light, may step forward, outlined in semi-obscurity, or simply dazzling the whole picture in a blaze of splendour. Helios may stand simply and restrained with uplifted arm. And here again no suggestion, I beg of you, of drapery. If he must stand sideways let him do so, but for heaven's sake don't deface the image of god with a dish-clout ! Tear away hideousness from the human form, from the human mind and from the human spirit. A perfect medium has at last been granted us. Let us be worthy of it.

You and I have got to work. We have got to begin to care and to care and to care. Man has perfected a means of artistic expression, that, I assure you, would have made Phidias turn in his grave (if he had a grave) with envy. Light speaks, is pliant, is malleable. Light is our friend and our god. Let us be worthy of it. Do not let us defame light, use and waste brilliant possibilities, elaborate material, making light a slave and a commonplace mountebank. Light has bounced on broncos, has levelled shafts at iron Indians, has burst into barricades, and has minced in crinolines long enough for one generation.

CLOSE UP

Elaborate experiment—*that* was well enough—and waste and waste and waste must inevitably precede perfection of any medium. But don't let's put up with too much of it. Here is our medium, as I say here is the thing that the Elusians would have been glad of ; a subtle device for portraying of the miraculous. Miracles and godhead are *not* out of place, are not awkward on the screen. A wand may (and does) waft us to fabulous lands, and beauty can and must redeem us.

But it must be a chaste goddess that we worship and a young goddess, and perhaps a little a ridiculous goddess. We must expect to be laughed at, must expect detractors and defamers as Athene must expect them if she strolled full armed or without arms down the Tottenham Court Road. We don't want exaggeration certainly, but modernity in dress, in thought, true modernity approaches more and more to classic standards. How many perfectly exquisite studies can be made of youth, sans drapery, or even with slight modifications (if your youth happens to be a maiden) of its last party frock. A judicious arrangement of a simple headband, for example, may transform Mary Jones into an Isthmian Calliope or young Tom Smith into Thessalian Diomed.

This is partly what I mean by "restraint", an artistic restraint that does not pre-visualise a Helen, an Andromeda, an Iphegenia, a Diomed, or a young Heracles as antiquated stage or ballet types done up in henna-edwigs. Types approaching the most perfect of the pre-fifth century vase paintings and the most luminous of pre-Periclean sculpture are to be found, I am certain, among the unexploited. I have no

CLOSE UP

quarrel with the professional as professional but with the professional in one art pretending to know everything about another art of whose very existence he is ignorant. Scholars should be brought in on this. Walls should arise if, for example, Troy-walls must arise, that are either exact in technical detail or else that are suggested merely, as I have earlier indicated by a few great stones. And so on. It is preconceived ideas that destroy all approach to real illumination. *What* do you know of beauty, of life, of reality should be the first questions that a manager or a producer asks his scenic artist. Not what was your job in New York, Chicago, Brixton, or Hollywood. So with the costumier. Begin at the beginning. Don't begin in the muddled middle. Our classic ladies of the screen are so often reminiscent of the spirit that led the Bernhardts and the Duses of the period to appear in crinoline when playing Phædra. We want to do away with the crinolined Phædras of this latter day and get back to stark reality.

That is where the beauty of the human body as the human body should have some sort of innings, but will it? Simplicity, restraint, formalisation are all Greek attributes, Hellenic restraint and Hellenic naturalisation that never saw the human body frankly other than the body of its diety. God made man, we are taught from our earliest days, in his own image. Well, let's up then and teach our teachers, our great-aunts who heard us our catechism that we *do* believe in God and do believe in beauty. Get away from all this broncho-chest-muscle business. Why can't some girl or boy just walk

CLOSE UP

on, in a fleecy peplum if you want but somehow just *be* the thing, do the thing with no exaggeration of sentiment such as we were treated to by Diotima in that nightmare (to me) *Heilegeberge (Wrath Of The Gods)*. Mountains are classic, the sea, sand, and the really charming grace and agility of Tom Jones when he leaps on a crowded City bus. Haven't you yourself noticed it? Untrained yet unsullied movement should merge with professional power and tact. The screen is the medium par excellence of movement—of trees, of water, of people, of bird wings. Flowers open by magic and magic spreads cloud forms, all in themselves "classic". Though, on the other hand, the most ornate back parlour crowded with gimcracks can represent "restraint" if the mind presenting it has its own intense restrained unit of idea. Take *Greed* as an example of the classic mind at work upon ornate exaggeration of detail in a sordid modern tenement atmosphere.

Here is my point and my contradiction; the over elaborate tenement detail of *Greed* struck a far more classic note than those sentimental German slow-ups of Diotima doing barefoot dancing on an uncomfortable slab of sea rock. The classic then, coming down to dots, is a point of view and "restraint" is a classic virtue which means simply tact and intuition and a sense of the rightness and the fitness of things in their interrelation. Diotima dancing on the mountains was so simply silly. With all its over elaborate detail, the dramatization of the impulse that led an illiterate, self-educated quack dentist to die in a desert with vultures hovering over his gold-laden, dying mule was Aescuylean. It is obvious that cer-

CLOSE UP

tain self conscious portraits of semi-naked studies must be fore-ordained banality. While perhaps some little unexpected effect of a bare arm lifted might bring back (as it does sometimes in a theatre) all of antiquity. We must work self-consciously and at the same time leave vast areas of mind and spirit free, open to idea, to illumination. I feel (though up to the present only in part successful) the only reality of this sort has come from Germany. The young men and the Paris tableau of the first instance in the *Force and Beauty* (Kraft und Schönheit) that I have mentioned and another "throned Cytherian" ; that proud simple figure curled this time on a great shell in the prologue of *Helen of Troy*. Could anything be more true, more real, more unsullied, more unstudied yet more exactly artificial, in the sense of art made reality ? Aphrogeneia. She is there always in my mind as an example of what art can do, what can be done and what must be done. Beauty restrained and chaste, with the overweaving of semi-phosphorescent light, in a few tense moments showed that the screen can rise to the ecstatic level of the poetic and religious ideals of pure Sophoclean formula.

H. D.

EMAK BAKIA

A series of fragments, a cinempoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment. Just as one can much better appreciate the abstract beauty in a fragment of a classic work than in its entirety so this film tries to indicate the essentials in contemporary cinematography. It is not an "abstract" film nor a story-teller ; its reasons for being are its inventions of light-forms and movements, while the more objective parts interrupt the monotony of abstract inventions or serve as punctuation. Anyone who can sit through an hour's projection of a film in which sixty per cent of the action passes in and out of doorways and in inaudible conversations, is asked to give twenty minutes of attention to a more or less logical sequence of ideas without any pretention of revolutionizing the film industry. To those who would still question "the reason for this extravagance" one can simply reply by translating the title *Emak Bakia*, an old Basque expression which means "don't bother me".

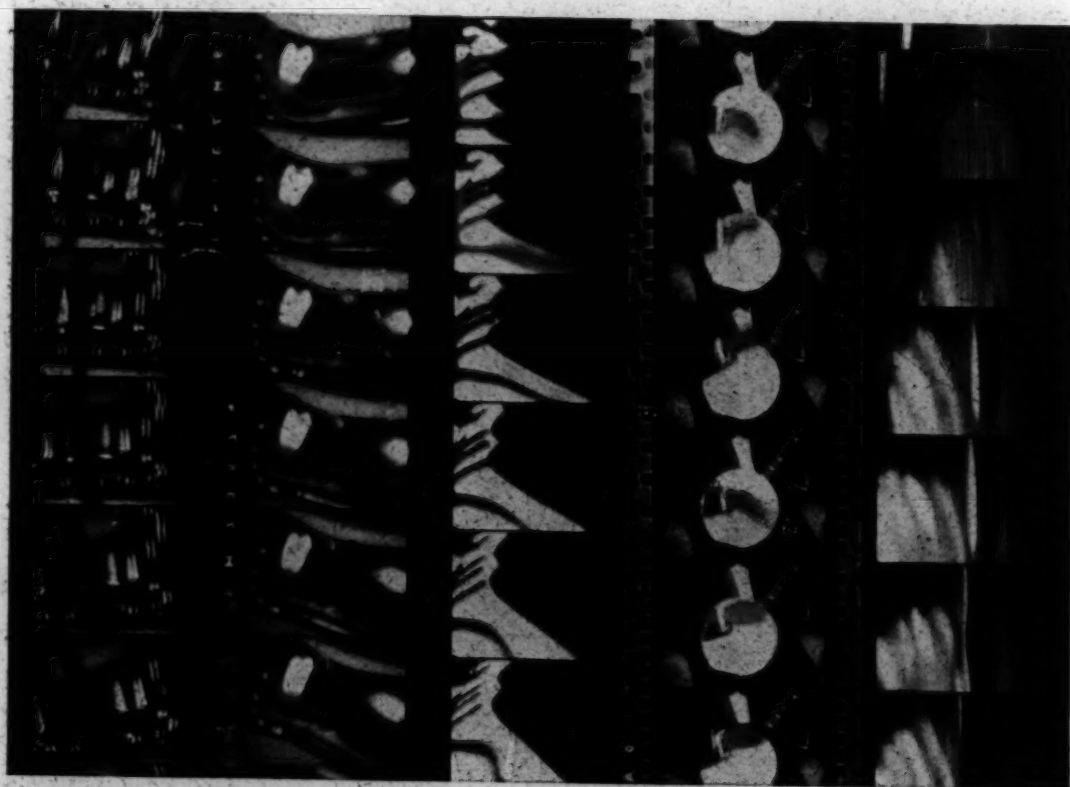
MAN RAY.

(*Emak Bakia* will be shown at the Studio des Ursulines Paris during the Autumn, and has already been given in New-York and at the Film Society in London. [Ed.]).

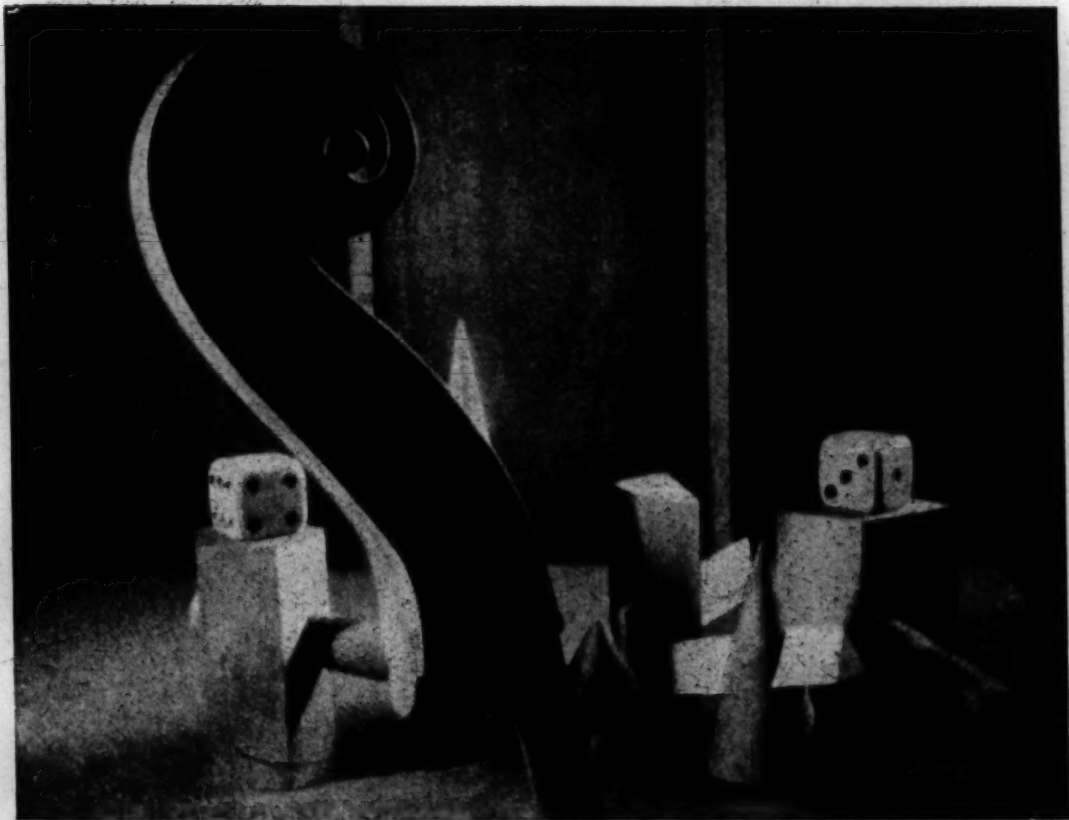
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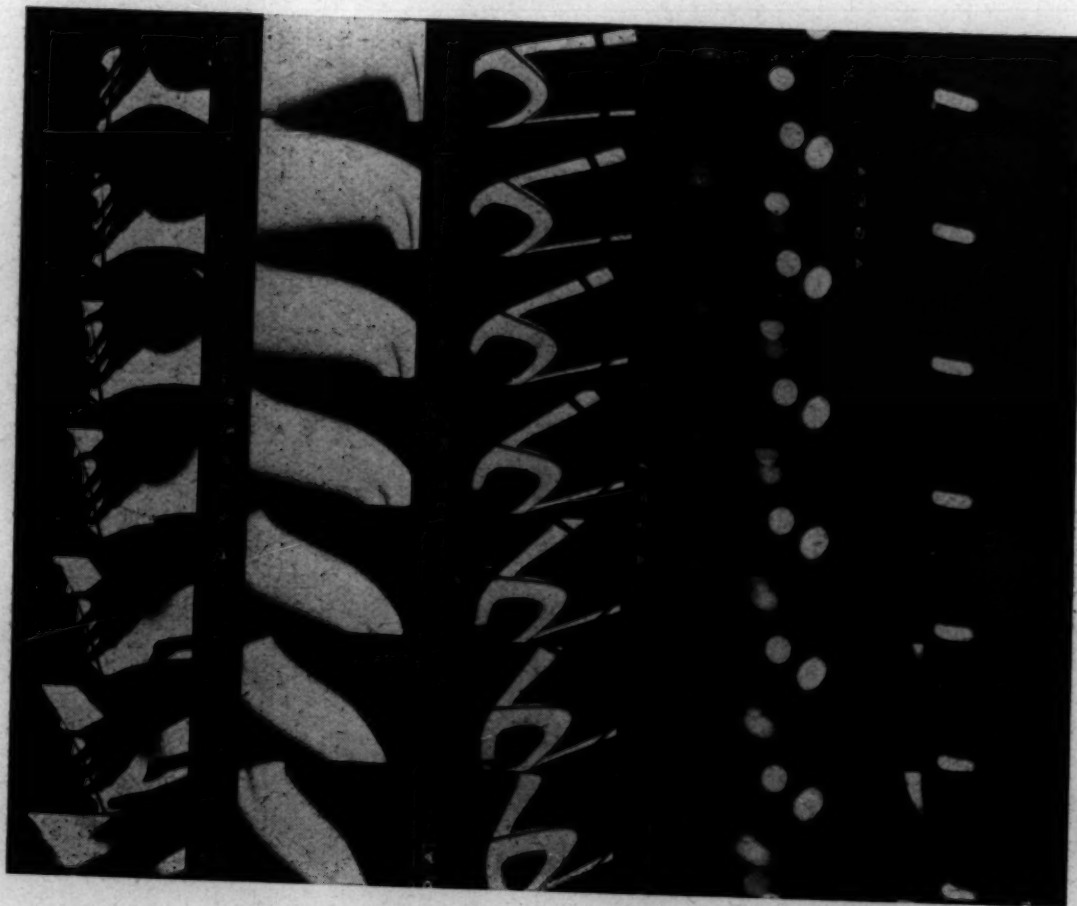
FROM "EMAK BAKIA"



FROM " EMAK BAKIA "



FROM "EMAK BAKIA"



LETTRE AU METTEUR EN SCÈNE

C'est comme vous le dites, mon pauvre ami : il faudrait tout savoir. Séduire des capitaux, apprivoiser des acteurs, connaître ce qui doit amuser le public, voilà déjà les trois talents difficiles à réunir. Vous, par dessus le marché, on vous accorde déjà du goût, du sens pittoresque et psychologique. Peut-il encore vous manquer quoi que ce soit ? Eh oui ! c'est cette vieille nature des choses qui résiste : par le truquage, et même par le filmage direct et non truqué, certains mouvements naturels ne se laissent pas encore reproduire.

Apprendre des éléments de physique, est-ce une humiliation pour un artiste ? Autrefois, les peintres apprenaient divers éléments de sciences, comme la perspective, l'anatomie ; aujourd'hui ils se sont débarrassés de cette servitude. Je rêve quelques fois à l'énorme mépris avec lequel M. Georges ROUAULT par exemple, doit considérer le traité de la peinture de Léonard de Vinci : il est tellement plus simple de faire mariner un fœtus dans du cirage, et de nommer cela, selon l'humeur du moment, une « fille de joie » ou un « juge ». Mais la peinture a absolument perdu tout public : les maniaques qui la recherchent ressemblent tout à fait aux collectionneurs de timbres : Est-ce beau, est-ce laid ? Il y a des cotes. Mais vous, la faiblesse et la force de votre art est d'avoir tout le public possible. Ce public veut du vraisemblable. Il ignore tout des

sciences, mais son œil lui a donné l'habitude de voir tomber les corps, par exemple, d'une certaine manière qu'il ne s'explique pas, mais qu'il exige qu'on reproduise.

Voyons comment vous ferez pour le satisfaire, et commençons par le commencement.

J'ai déjà eu le plaisir de vous apprendre que tous les corps tombaient également vite, sauf la résistance de l'air. (Ne croyez pas que je me moque de votre ignorance : le monde n'a pas été sûr avant Galilée, que la chute des corps suivit une verticale). Donc lorsque vous faites une *maquette*, que vous agrandirez pour représenter la chute d'une maison, n'ayez aucune crainte : moellons, briques et poutres tomberont également vite. Une seule difficulté : ne faites pas choir de planches à plat, car la résistance de l'air les fait très vite tourner, et les planches de votre maquette, si légères soient-elles, tournoieraient mal. Mais vous savez déjà, par expérience, que l'écrroulement de votre maquette, il faudra le filmer à un autre rythme que le rythme normal. Vous essayez, je crois, plusieurs ralentis différents, et vous adoptez « celui qui fait le mieux ». Économisez votre pellicule. Pour l'écrroulement d'une maison à un étage, il faut que la chute de votre maquette, dure, quelle que soit sa hauteur, environ une seconde. Mais voulez-vous une formule générale applicable à toutes les hauteurs ? Calculez votre temps t , en secondes ; votre espace e , en mètres ; sachez que l'accélération g , est égale à 9 m. 81, et vous saurez la longueur du temps :

$$t = \sqrt{\frac{2e}{g}}$$

CLOSE UP

Si, comme je le crains vous avez de la peine à calculer une racine carrée, faites faire l'opération par le moindre professeur de physique : cela sera encore plus avantageux ; on trouve, par l'expérience, qu'un quart d'heure de physicien ne coûte pas plus cher, en France, qu'un mètre de pellicule.

J'en viens à quelques difficultés plus sensibles.

Il vous est impossible de filmer en même temps, sur maquette, une chute libre comme celle d'une pierre, et l'abattement d'une poutre qui touchait la terre par une extrémité : les lois de chute ne sont pas les mêmes dans les deux cas, et la chute des poutres de la maquette paraîtrait trop lente.

Une autre difficulté naît de la nature de votre appareil.

Je suppose que vous deviez faire tomber, en grandeurs réelles, un objet devant un mur de pierre de taille, devant une paroi de petits carreaux, ou n'importe quel fond quadrillé ou coupé de lignes horizontales : si vous prenez dix photos de la chute, qu'il y ait quinze divisions sur le fond, et que votre objet tombant ne soit pas plus grand qu'une division, que se produira-t-il ? Le public verra que 5 de ces pierres de taille, carreaux ou lignes horizontales ne lui auront été cachées à aucun moment par l'objet tombant ; l'illusion du mouvement ne se produira pas : il ne verra qu'une suite de positions successives et les lignes restées intactes entre deux positions l'empêcheront d'imaginer les positions intermédiaires.

A cela deux remèdes.

Faire tomber les objets devant un fond uni.

Si c'est impossible, comme lorsque le décor est composé de maisons, organisez une chute en comète ; que votre objet, s'il est long, soit alourdi d'en bas pour tomber bien droit : ainsi deux de ses positions successives se couvriront en partie, et l'illusion sera parfaite. Si votre objet est court, trouvez un prétexte pour lui attacher un corps flottant, comme serait pour un homme un drap, un long vêtement, un cache-nez, comme peuvent-être pour bien des objets un lambeau d'étoffe, une traînée de corde ou de paille.

Et ne me dites pas que l'éducation du public est faite de telle sorte que vous pouvez faire choir des objets avec un ralenti exagéré, ou les faire, comme une muscade de prestidigitateur, passer du haut en bas d'une image sans intermédiaire : sans doute le public y consentira, mais, si vous lui offrez mieux, l'impression de vérité qu'il en retirera lui donnera une confiance dont l'émotion du drame pourra profiter.

Un conseil : ne faites jamais de maquettes de vagues et de naufrages. Tous les baquets que j'ai vu agiter, tous les bateaux d'enfants que j'ai vu flotter ou couler n'ont jamais fait d'impression sur le public, autre que le ridicule. Si vous tombez dans ce travers, évitez de faire, pour imiter les vagues, glisser de l'eau sur une planche : vous obtiendrez une vitesse accélérée. Or la vitesse des vagues est constante ; et même, lorsqu'elles écument et piquent de haut c'est qu'elles ralentissent de la base. (Comme lorsque vous freinez brusquement en auto, votre tête bascule et vous donnez du nez dans la glace.) Pour avoir des ondes parallèles et non en cercles élargis, trempez

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une planche droite et secouez-la verticalement... Mais la contre-ondulation, les retours d'onde dans un bassin fermé, vous ne les éviterez jamais. Vive donc la nature.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

PRÉCIS OF THE POINTS RAISED IN M. PRÉVOST'S *LETTRE*

Monsieur Prévost points out that the difficulties artists once encountered (he adds that to-day they are freed from this servitude !) in matters of anatomical science, etc. now devolve even more acutely on the heads of film-producers. Artists having lost their public, film-producers, on the contrary, are, if anything, overwhelmed by it. And this public, without scientific knowledge, insists on an effect of complete reality. For instance, if a thing is to fall, it has to fall in a certain way ; they could not describe it but know if it is rightly done.

He gives useful information in this respect, and in the using of models. Bodies, he says, fall at different rates of time on account of the resistance of air, hence different rates of photography will be needed. To obtain successful results a general formula has been devised, relating height to time. Let t represent time, e the distance of the fall, and given that

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the acceleration g is at the rate of 9 mètres, 81., you can obtain the time of the fall as in the equation given.

It is impossible, he states, to simultaneously photograph the falling say of a stone and a beam ; the laws of falling are different in each case, and if the stone is photographed the fall of the beam will appear too slow.

A difficulty is presented regarding the falling of objects before a background composed of squares or horizontal lines. Example. Ten photographs are turned during the fall. The background has fifteen divisions. If each of these is equal in size to the falling object five of these divisions will thus have not been covered by the falling object. Result, no illusion of movement. What happens is a succession of positions, the lines left uncovered between each successive position will prevent the ilusion of *intermediate* positions.

Suggested remedies are a plain background or a *comet* fall, i. e. the attachment of some floating substance to the falling object. The divisions being thus partly covered, the illusion is created.

THE REAL DANGER OF THE CINEMA

When critics, after years of earnest opposition, yielded so far as to acknowledge the cinematograph as an infant art, they found consolation in the idea that, by following the same

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induction, it would be necessary at regular intervals to give the infant a sound box on the ears.

This is now a game in which everyone may join. No intellectual equipment is necessary, but if you happen to be an expert on something or other—piano-tuning will do nicely—the world will listen with increased respect to your views on “what is wrong with the cinema”. All that is necessary is to find something wrong.

To say that it is a game is to put it too modestly ; it is an international sport. Engaged in it, men throw off not only their coats, but their muddy vesture, revealing spiritual qualities hitherto undetected. The best-seller novelist or playwright, for instance—we have laughed at him and spurned his works. Yet, as his criticisms of the film reveal, no one reverences Art more than he. In his opinion, the cinema must rid itself of cheap sensationalism and trashy plots ; it must have subtlety and the artistic touch. Could ideals go further ?

It is another extraordinary attribute of the cinema—apart from such little functions as undermining youth’s morals, ruining the nation’s eyesight, destroying the faculty of speech, and breaking up the British Empire—that it causes its critics to behave as it behaves itself.

Thus a writer, warming up to complain of illiterate subtitles, seems to become rather illiterate himself. Employing the most violent language, he goes on to denounce the screen’s violence. He ridicules the film producer’s propensity to exaggerate, but in doing so exaggerates that exaggeration.

In a review loaded with inaccuracies, he deplores the inaccuracies of the historical film. He declares that the motion picture makes light of sacred things, and two or three paragraphs farther on entertains us with a most caustic and cynical discussion on the theme of motherlove. Finally, after a disgusted survey of the mobs who patronise the cinema theatre, he implores film producers not to underrate the intelligence of their public.

There is also the matter of vision. Strange to say, although this quality is "sadly lacking" in the film world, it is also sadly lacking in the film critics. No theory is put forward until it has been projected on the screen ; the highbrow pen follows the studio product as cautiously as the baton of an impostor conductor follows an orchestra.

It would be rash, of course, to deduce from this that there is any intelligence in the film world ; and it would be blasphemous to laugh at our intelligentsia. On the horns of that dilemma no one dares to ask, when a particular film wins the approval of a particular critic who has hitherto maintained the screen to be a worthless medium, why he with his superior intellect and artistic susceptibility could not have foreseen, however dimly, some such imagery in mind as that which now faces him in reality.

Yet one day somebody—perhaps some small boy demoralised by the pictures—will give the show away ; and then—what will happen ?

This brings us to the real danger of the cinema, a danger not to the infamous masses who support it, but to the famous

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individuals who are endeavouring to knock it down. It has played mischievously with all their prophecies and judgments. It has caused most of our intellectual giants to lapse into utter nonsense ; it has caused most of our masters of pure English to indulge in ugly wit ; it has caused most of our broad-minded observers to become petty and moralising ; and it has caused most of our greatest thinkers to stop thinking.

What need has posterity for men of contemporary minds ? Is it fair that the great lances of our day should be rendered Quixotic by the cinema's windmills ? Truly we cannot prevent them from tilting, but it might be a worthy sacrifice for their future fame if we abolished the cinema.

ERIC ELLIOTT.

FILMS IN EDUCATION

THE COMPLEX OF THE MACHINE

How many people realise that only sixty years ago, in the childhood almost of their parents, thousands of children under twelve years of age were imprisoned yearly for minor offences ? If they did realize it surely they would not talk so glibly about "the good old days" ? Even now education is often an education in wrong values and it is doubtful whether more

than a few of the great Englishmen of the past half century have emerged from conventional channels. Usually they have had an independant childhood. But progress is being made for the majority, though very, very slowly.

And because progress is being made, opposition to it has increased in violence. The old system is afraid because the new method attacks it economically. It would be impossible for a schoolmaster trained in the schools of yesterday to teach in the progressive schools of to-day. For the meaning of the words and symbols used would be as incomprehensible as an Eskimo dialect. Schools of the end of last century based their tradition of teaching upon the fact that the intellect was a gift bestowed on a few and that it was "morbid and unhealthy" for the average boy or girl to be interested in their studies. To speak to such a schoolmaster today of the Dalton plan or of independant study is to be accused—quite illogically—of communism and corruption.

For it is the schoolmaster under the new method that must be in focus, not the child. He must really *know* his subject, not teach it from a text book. He must really be enthusiastic and able to answer, even at times to ask questions. Above all he must accept intellect as something able to be developed in ninety per cent of children with the proper environment and not a romantic and hazardous gift flung without reason to the one or two.

But the obstruction to educational progress at the moment is lack of teachers. And it is just here that the cinema could help.

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Sixty years ago machinery as a vital force in life was barely discovered. Just as the old schoolmaster resents the revolution in educational methods so the world still—as a whole—resents and resents machines.

The generation just leaving school is the first generation who has been used from childhood to motor cars, telephones, aeroplanes. The generation used to films from infancy is still at school. And it is impossible after a certain age for all but the few, to learn or to progress. So our parents and our grandparents resent, always sub-consciously and often consciously, machines that have robbed them of a sense of power, that they cannot themselves manage, and that have placed the young in a state equal with themselves.

So with all the will they have, with a veneration for the "good old days" that amounts to a religion (in spite of child prisoners and female drudges and sweated labour) they fight against the power of the machine.

And they have power ; it is useless to deny it. They have money, prestige, the devastating weapon against the young, demand of sympathy, appeal to the parent-complex few sensitive natures ever entirely lose. They impose their will on the majority of schools. They block solidly, so far as they are able, development and progress.

The innovators have power too. They have beauty, enthusiasm, a sense of life behind them. Even a kind of hypnotism that the mob responds to because it is very hard to crush out desire of life in the young. But instead of progression being open to the world at large, it is open only to the persis-

tent few, a kind of natural selection that perhaps has value, but the wastage involved is too immense ever to be realised to the full.

It is easier for a machine that has the capacity to make for discomfort to be endured than for a machine to be accepted that contains elements of pleasure. The first victories of steel and wire and electricity were in factories, partly on account of economic conditions, partly also because their use did not involve enjoyment. When art becomes involved, or the possibility of pleasure the opposition still felt by most people over thirty five towards machinery in any form, can be repressed no longer and comes violently to the surface.

Films teach crime, are bad for the eyesight, cinemas breed germs, movies are responsible for all the evils and the restlessness of the modern age. They were no cinemas to speak of in 1910 but the World War happened. Epidemics at least of some diseases are decreasing in violence since 1920.

Watch any small child learning to write. He is unable to control the movements of his hand and wrist and so the letters straggle. Instead of realizing that it is the hand which is to blame the child *seeing* the letter, translates the fault to be with the eye. He bends lower and lower until his nose almost touches the paper. This is seldom or never corrected by the teacher. The result is quite often impaired eyesight through using the wrong eye-muscles. But it is hardly ever traced to its actual cause.

But put a child of the same age at the typewriter. In a week he will be printing letters. The sheer mechanism of

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typing insures erectness. Seeing the words come swiftly on to the paper, more can be written, spelling mistakes are fewer there is great interest in phrase formation. A lot of eyesight and energy is saved (most children learn the touch system very easily) and the child is spared a lot of worry over spelling books and grammar exercises. These statements are the result of personal observation of a number of cases.

But the educational authorities will not hear of the typewriter. We have sent letters and articles to the leading educational journals. They are returned with the implication that the typewriter is non-moral or with the statement "we dont want our children mechanised". Children they say, must write labouriously by hand, the dear little things, though their eyesight suffer and their energy be wasted. It sounds illogical but the schoolmaster who will discuss complexes and repressions from a comparatively open minded angle will get red in the face and rigid with anger when it is suggested that typewriters should be installed in every kindergarten.

And it is just the same with the cinema. Most children learn visually ; most children like any kind of illustration or picture. But the cinema, they say, has not proved itself, fit has no educational value, it over stimulates the brain, it rightens the nervous child. And to some extent these strictures are true. But they are true only because the educational authorities have outlawed the movies, have not taken the trouble to see that intelligent pictures were made and that being made, children were given an opportunity to see them. Interest in science, geography and history is killed in hun-

dreds of children a year through dull methods of presentation and the failure to capture the interest—and the respect—of the child.

It would take more than an article to outline the way in which the cinema could be used to its full extent in education. There is for instance no reason why children should not write, direct, photograph and make their own films with very little instruction. There is hardly a subject taught that could not be helped by the cinema provided the film is prepared for first by a lesson and is then followed up by practical work. Where the classes are large it can make up for the lack of individual instruction. Where they are small it can speed up progress and open new possibilities. But full development educationally is not possible until the ground is cleared of the old "complex of the machine".

BRYHER.

LES HOMMES AUX MILLE VISAGES

Les classiques français, avec leur règle des trois unités, *unité de temps, unité de lieu, unité d'action*, imposaient aux acteurs l'unité de visage.

Le même jour, dans un même palais, occupés d'une seule

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passion, les interprètes n'avaient guère le moyen de se métamorphoser. Et puis, la parfaite ordonnance du discours, l'harmonie du verbe, la régularité des vers, la logique et la composition de l'ensemble, aussi bien que l'analyse à tout prix subtile des détails, si elles étudiaient et peignaient l'homme, n'en accomplissaient pas moins sa transsubstantiation. Ce qui grouillait de plus informe au fond des consciences était discuté, représenté sur un plan de hautaine précision. L'art qui ne voulait rien ignorer, par culte de la grandeur et goût de la politesse, en venait à cet idéal classique dont la France a été si nettement marquée, que Gertrude Stein pouvait dire avec juste raison que les Français, même ceux d'aujourd'hui et, en dépit de la littérature volontairement confessionnelle, n'ont pas le sens de l'intimité. Défaut d'ailleurs commun à toute la civilisation méditerranéenne. Les tragédiens grecs, s'ils acceptaient que la douleur ou le désir tordît leurs figures, voulaient que ce fut une fois pour toutes et, afin que plus sûrement durât leur expression, ils la figeaient dans des masques. Ainsi se créaient des types d'autant moins faciles à oublier qu'ils ne changeaient jamais. Dangereux héritage échu à notre XVII^e siècle, qui d'autre part, émerveillé par le *Je pense, donc je suis* de Descartes, ne doute jamais de l'unité des individus et mais n'en rêve pas moins de découvrir une notion générale et précise de l'homme.

Et cependant un Jean Racine, à la fin de sa vie, écrit : *Je sens deux hommes en moi*. Touchant et sublime aveu d'un être dont la complexité n'a pu être endiguée. Ses contemporains furent injustes parce que sous l'apparente surface unie,

d'étranges floraisons éclataient. Or, voici qu'en ce ^{XX}^e siècle, un autre génie, qui s'était condamné à l'uniforme grotesque, comme Racine, selon l'exigence de son époque, avait contraint ses héros à l'alexandrin et aux draperies à l'antique, d'une silhouette toujours la même, tire non pas deux, mais cent, mais mille hommes.

L'écran par les étranges franchises des gestes, du rythme, des expressions, nous force à voir la vraie richesse des êtres, leur imprévisible multiplicité. Nulle précaution esthétique ne peut nous leurrer et nous ne prendrons jamais le carton pâte de certains metteurs en scènes pour le miracle des Rêves.

Les secrets qu'un Picasso, par la peinture, a tiré des objets, le cinéma d'un paysage, d'une figure, les force à se lever. La photographie animée de ce qui nous semble si simple est le seul moyen que nous avons d'être convaincus des métempsychoses, peu de réalité de ce monde extérieur, de sa poésie, en un mot.

Mais cette poésie, nulle formule ne la suscite.

Éblouis par les mots « inconscient, subconscient » par les découvertes de Freud, certains ont cru qu'un univers systématiquement de guingois nous donnerait de plus fortes impressions. Ainsi, ai-je vu un film inspiré de *Crime et Châtiment*, où les maisons étaient toutes de travers sans que d'ailleurs rien de frappant n'en résultât.

De même, la perfection de la technique n'est pas tout. Exemple : *Variétés*, où Lya de Putti, chirurgicalement dégraissée mais inexpressive de visage, est l'interprète digne de ce film à succès mais sans imagination. De même encore de

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l'esthétique de la machine. Dans *Metropolis*, la vision initiale de gratte-ciel et la marche résignée des hommes du sous-sol, sont aussi émouvantes que, vaine l'insistance à nous promener sur, dans, et dessous les fausses usines souterraines.

Les gens de métier sont parfois les plus dangereux, et leurs précautions exaspérantes. Ainsi un film comme *La Croisière Noire* où l'on sent l'effort nous touche tellement moins que le simple *Voyage de Gide au Congo*, tant il est vrai qu'il n'y a ni des hommes de lettres, ni des hommes de théâtre, ni des hommes de cinéma, mais des hommes tout court.

Les hommes aux mille visages.

RENÉ CREVEL.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

*Naturally let the smooth face, the solemn
body arrange themselves, construct a column
of personage against a column of sun.*

*This is the personage as planned
to meet the camera, assured and bland,
full of achievement, safe and plain,
of visibly substantial brain.*

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*Admit the face he knows, and then
wait for the shift in the eyes, the shadowy grin
he does not know. Go down with these to find
the secret source of the grin, in the mind.*

*Go down with sun and mirror and lens
into the shadow beyond sense
to catch the ironical unsuspected lines
of spirit grinning at a brain's designs.*

*There are wise things beyond the red and the bright
safe gold to be said in straight black and white.*

M. DE L. WALCH.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

II

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Our first musician was a pianist who sat in the gloom beyond the barrier and played without notes. His playing was a continuous improvisation varying in tone and tempo according to what was going forward on the screen. During the earlier part of the evening he would sometimes sing. He

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would sing to the sailing by of French chateaux, *sotto voce*, in harmony with the gently flowing undertone that moved so easily from major to minor and from key to key. His singing seemed what probably it was, a spontaneous meditative appreciation of things seen. For the Gazette he had martial airs, waltzes for aeroplanes. Jigs accompanied the comic interludes and devout low-toned nocturnes the newest creations of fashion. For drama he usually had a leit-motif, borrowed or invented, set within his pattern of sound moving suitably from pianissimo to fortissimo. He could time a passage to culminate and break punctually on a staccato chord at a crisis. This is a crude example of his talent for spontaneous adaptation. As long as he remained with us music and picture were one. If the film were good he enhanced it, heightened its effect of action moving forward for the first time. If it were anything from bad to worst his music helped the onlooker to escape into incidentals and thence into his private world of meditation or of thought.

The little palace prospered and the management grew ambitious. Monthly programmes were issued, refreshments were cried up and down the gangways and perfumed disinfectants squirted ostentatiously over the empty spaces. The pianist vanished and the musical accompaniment became a miniature orchestra, conspicuous in dress clothes and with lights and music stands and scores between the audience and the screen, playing set pieces, for each scene a piece. At each change of scene one tune would give place to another, in a different key, usually by means of a tangle of discords. The

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total result of these efforts towards improvement was a destruction of the relationship between onlookers and film. With the old unity gone the audience grew disorderly. Talking increased. Prosperity waned. Much advertisement of "west-end successes" pulled things together for a while during which the management aimed still higher. An evening came when in place of the limping duet of violin and piano several instruments held together by some kind of conducting produced sprightly and harmonious effects. At half-time the screen was curtained leaving the musician's pit in a semi-darkness where presently wavered a green spot-light that came to rest upon the figure of a handsome young Jew dramatically fronting the audience with violin poised for action. Fireworks. Applause. After which the performance was allowed to proceed. Within a month the attendance was reduced to a scattered few and in due course the hall was "closed for decorations", to reopen some months later "under entirely new management", undecorated and with the old pianist restored to his place. The audience drifted back.

But during the interregnum, and whilst concerted musical efforts were doing their worst, an incident occurred that convinced me that any kind of musical noise is better than none. Our orchestra failed to appear and the pictures moved silently by, lifeless and colourless, to the sound of intermittent talking and the continuous faint hiss and creak of the apparatus. The result seemed to justify the curses of the most ardent enemies of the cinema and I understood at last what

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they mean who declare that dramatic action in photograph is obscene because it makes no personal demand upon the onlooker. It occurred to me to wonder how many of these enemies are persons indifferent to music and those to whom music of any kind is a positive nuisance.

If ever films are made to sound, if not only the actors but the properties, street traffic, cooking-stoves and cataracts are given voices as are already in some cinemas the bombs and thunderstorms falling upon the dumb players, musical accompaniment will be superfluous whether as a cover for the sounds from the operator's gallery and the talking of the audience, or as a help to the concentration that is essential to collaboration between the onlooker and what he sees. For the present music is needed and generally liked even by those who are not aware that it helps them to create the film and gives the film both colour and sound. In our small palace we object to any sound coming from the screen. We dislike even the realistic pistol-shot that was heard once or twice during our period of great ambitions. With the help of the puff of smoke and our pianist's staccato chord we can manufacture our own reality.

And since the necessary stillness and concentration depend in part upon the undisturbed continuity of surrounding conditions, the musical accompaniment should be both continuous and flexible. By whatever means, the aim is to unify. If film and music proceed at cross purposes the audience is distracted by a half-conscious effort to unite them. The doings of an orchestra that is an entertainment in itself go far

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in destroying the entertainment one came forth to seek. I saw in Switzerland a number of films whose captions were in columns and bi-lingual and whose appearance was the signal for a chorus of linguists making translations for the benefit of less gifted friends. But the strife of tongues on and off the screen was less disturbing than the innocent doings of the orchestra which opened proceedings before the lights were lowered with a sprightly march and went into the darkness with it and played it until the end of the reel, which had shown us a midnight murder on a moor, and then became visible, lights up, cheerily playing yet another martial air. They continued throughout the performance, vanishing and reappearing and playing, regardless of what might be going forward upon the screen, "band music" with a perfect mechanical precision.

But orchestral music, whether at its worst or at its best is unsuited to any but the largest halls where perhaps, though a concert grand can supply all needs, an orchestra, that has rehearsed, with the film, music written or arranged for that film until the two are one, is the ideal. Short of that the single player at his best is not to be beaten.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Here is a much more important point than it sounds. Is it essential that chocolate manufacturers wrap their boxes in all those cellophane papers ? One knows that people like to make the cinema a light-refreshment lounge, but how often at some arresting or poignant moment, someone beside you starts peeling her chocolate box ! First of all air-proof paper, which fumbled at in the dark takes fully a minute to tear off, and crumple in one's hand, and roll under the seat in front ; then the box lid and its reluctant severing, carrying in wake vast overflowings of fancy trimmings ; then more translucent paper covering fancy paper mats, then shredded paper, and bits of cardboard, and folded paper, and crinkly containers, and more often than not another wrapping round the chocolate itself. In all, a five to eight minute operation, and guaranteed, one feels, to be as noisy as specially constructed papers can make it. Well, if it is hygiene, after all is it hygiene ? And isn't it rather overdoing things ? Anyhow, there must be all sorts of papers less noisy, and quite as suitable.

Moreover, by some inevitable mass self-consciousness, the peeling of one box will remind dozens of ladies and gentlemen of the unopened boxes lying on their laps, and one's attention is swept away in the sudden hurricane that drowns

the sound of the orchestra for a couple of reels. Tension created by the film gives rise to the unconscious infantile sucking habit. The sudden frenzy of chocolate eating and cigarette lighting immediately accompanies an emotional climax, and so one supposes cigarette smoking and chocolate eating are not the things to attack, but the mummy wrappings on the boxes, and the indiscriminate striking of matches while the film is in progress.

I have heard, too, the breaking of a female voice across drama. . . . "Ices? . . . Chocolates? . . . Cigarettes?" In suavest theatres, drifting forms going to and fro. "Chocolates? . . . Ices? . . . Cigarettes?" Making a kind of market place of the gangways, her progress rung by the chink of coins, and long confabulations raucously whispered, and voices hailing from five rows back.

* * *

We spoke last month of the need for a cinema that would show old films from time to time, films of special interest or quality. A praiseworthy effort is being made in this direction by the Cinema du Vieux-Colombier in Montpellier. There are of course great difficulties in the way of such a step, trade prejudice, for example. However the Vieux Colombier is making an excellent start. *Rien que les heures* by Cavalcanti, *Jazz*, by James Cruze, and *Joyless Street* by Pabst are among their revivals.

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A UFA FILM

KOPF HOCH CHARLEY

(Bigamie)

Billed as the 1927-1928 *Ufa* super-production, this is on no account to be missed. Its integrity is a real achievement, and sincerest congratulations are to be tendered to its makers, and sincerest homage to be paid to Ellen Richter, its star. Here indeed is a film two thirds of which at least are flawless, and that is roughly two thirds better than any average possible production. The opening shows us the departure of a steamship from Cuxhaven for New York, and the farewell words of a wife whose husband is travelling to America to try and borrow money. One is instantly struck with the magnificent treatment of the crowds, the hot faces in quest of information, the shouldering, the sort of stricken, insectivorous running about of people sailing on a long voyage ; the half exalted, half stupified helplessness of the friends and relatives seeing them off.

"Don't go", the wife implores. "Something tells me we will never meet again." ... Rush and serry of crowds, sirens, lifting of gangways, waving. The wife's arm waves mechanically, her face taut and despairing among the waving and the faces. Crowds surge past her on both sides, she steps with them, but more slowly, and the camera with her. Presently she is alone. An official passes, she must leave the

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yard. In the street she signals a waiting taxi. Speaks. Then stands seeing nothing. The driver tells her to get in. She shakes her head again, hands him money, walks away. One hundred marks. He taps his forehead grimacing. On a bridge she sees the world collapsing in two halves. Goes on again. Tottering blindly again toward the docks. Falling finally in some suicidal instinct before a car.

Through all this the effect of dissociation and complete blankness is achieved with sheer genius, both on the part of producer and of Fraulein Ellen Richter, whose acting, let it be said now and again and again, was the most mesmerically insinuating thing imaginable. Her movements, her thoughts were somehow one. When she moved a hand or an arm or clasped quick fingers together, hunching a little her shoulders, it was expressing a hundred things, a hundred psychologically accurate things. It was as if she herself were but a thin curtain across her mind or spirit ; the quality of her beauty was so exactly right for this cryptic, deracinated life.

* * *

To me the most brilliant moments were the arrival of the husband in America ; the impression of helplessness, of fear, of alienation—the sense that everything one had ever learnt was of no more use to one. Bewilderment, sheer inability to cope with it all. The hotel interior was another moment of genius. Again the management of crowds, the tremendous

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bustle, and swarm and mechanism. While he drives through the New York streets, his wife drives through Berlin. There is a lengthy series of contrasts of the two cities, flashing from one to the other, another triumphal moment. Sheer brilliance until the beginning of Paris night-life and titles. The first time I saw it, from the moment Paris came on the scene one got more and more depressed. The psychology seemed to go to bits, the old early-Victorian deference to Counts and Dukes and Princes and levées broke out like an unseemly malady. The lady alternately simpered and scoffed. "Let me take you" said the bogus card-sharper-count "to Paris—city of gaiety, of life, of laughter" or words to that effect, in the best TRILBY tradition. And ironically, while he says it, they are driving through the streets of Berlin,—city, (one would imagine from this), of unsullied small-town respectability. Then they deferentially flash on some fades-in and fades-out of Paris views, and merge into a large overcrowded ballroom and restaurant, the sort of place that we (knowing our Paris) know to be the kind of place the outer-suburbs grace from ten to midnight. Here Charley is seen seeing life. A very good example of an under-world duke and the bogus count make love to her alternately. From then onward it was pure Trilby stuff, and of that exact period. The preposterous finale made one angry. It was almost like the genius that did the first two thirds of the picture turning into a sub-normal tract-writer.

But because of the sheer greatness of its beginning one saw it again, and this time one saw beyond, and got to wondering.

CLOSE UP

There might, just possibly there *might* be a great idea behind it, one that had not quite come off. Not having read the romance on which it was founded it would be hard to say, but the second time, one noticed people continually pointed to their foreheads when alluding to Charley. Here was the explanation of her ready smile, her complete, insouciant drifting from one pair of arms to others and then others ? Was this linked up with her earlier shock, was it that she was meant to be unhinged, seeking what she had lost ? still ill, and satisfied by nothing, or, through weariness, anything ? In view of the complete clarity of meaning in the beginning one fears not, and anyhow, that particular type of woman would not attract those particular types of men in just that way (except perhaps the one who had her watched) nor would she be sold on them. Of course, interest was maintained up to the last, but all that du Maurier stuff from Paris onwards got more and more depressing. But one did leave at the end feeling curiously dissociated one's self, and quite mesmerized. The acting was superb. The madame of the dress shop, the madame of the pension, the American uncle and his confrere, the rather birdlike little man who eventually gets her, all were brilliant and convincing. Kopf Hoch Charley is a distinct advance and landmark ; and let us wish it the success it deserves.

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